

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 PER-01 SIG-01 A-01
MMO-01 EB-08 SCA-01 IO-13 INR-07 PM-04 CU-02
/067 W

-----081835Z 126554 /50

R 081539Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2591

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 DAMASCUS 2277

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: AMGT PFOR US SY
SUBJ: PARM: ANNUAL POLICY AND RESOURCE ASSESSMENT FY 1979
- PART II AND III

1. SYRIA IS A DIFFICULT COUNTRY IN WHICH TO LIVE AND WORK
AND POST HAS STILL NOT ACHIEVED WHAT COULD BE CALLED A NORMAL
OPERATING POSTURE. GRADUAL BUILDUP OF PERSONNEL RESOURCES
HAS OCCURRED SINCE RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS IN JUNE 1974.
DAO AND USAID BEGAN OPERATIONS IN EARLY 1975 AND REGIONAL
AGRICULTURE ATTACHE WAS ADDED IN SECOND HALF OF 1976. I
CONSIDER THESE RESOURCES NOW ADEQUATE, INsofar AS SUBSTANTIVE
OPERATIONS ARE CONCERNED, TO MEET CURRENT REQUIREMENTS.

2. POLITICAL SECTION:

DURING 1976, OUR ACCESS TO OFFICIALS AND INFORMATION IN
SYRIA REACHED A POINT WHERE ADDITION OF POLITICAL OFFICER
AND POLITICAL SECRETARY WERE JUSTIFIED. ACTIVE, ENERGETIC
OFFICERS BACKED BY COMPETENT SECRETARY CAN FURNISH WASHINGTON
WITH GROWING NEED FOR ACCURATE INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS ON
SYRIAN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS DURING IMPORTANT
PERIOD AHEAD. LENGTHY TDY ASSIGNMENT OF POLITICAL SECTION
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SECRETARY TO BEIRUT HAS PREVENTED SECTION FROM OPERATING
TO FULL CAPACITY BUT THAT PROBLEM SHOULD BE RESOLVED BY
SUMMER 1977. ONE LOCAL VACANCY, CAUSED BY RETIREMENT OF
SENIOR TRANSLATOR, REMAINS UNFILLED.

3. ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL SECTION:

GROWTH OF POTENTIAL SYRIAN MARKETS FOR U.S. EXPORTS, U.S. PARTICIPATION IN DAMASCUS INTERNATIONAL FAIR AND NEED TO DEVELOP ACCURATE ECONOMIC ANALYSIS AND INFORMATION FULLY OCCUPY ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL SECTION. PROMISING CANDIDATE FOR LOCAL ECONOMIC SPECIALIST POSITION HAS RECENTLY BEEN HIRED AND IS IN PROBATIONARY PERIOD. COMMERCIAL LIBRARY IS ALSO BEING MOVED TO OTHER QUARTERS TO ACCOMMODATE EXPANDED ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION. AFTER THIS SHIFT AND ASSUMING LOCAL ECONOMIC SPECIALIST MEETS OUR EXPECTATIONS, SECTION SHOULD BE FULLY CAPABLE OF MEETING RESPONSIBILITIES.

4. CONSULAR SECTION:

CONSULAR OPERATIONS WERE EXPANDED DURING LATE 1976/EARLY 1977 TO HANDLE LEBANESE CONSULAR SERVICES. THESE ARE NOW BEING TRANSFERRED BACK TO BEIRUT, BUT THE VOLUME OF PURELY SYRIAN CONSULAR BUSINESS CONTINUES TO GROW. HAVING REQUESTED AND JUSTIFIED ADDITION OF ONE LOCAL POSITION IN FY 1978 (76 DAMASCUS 442, 76 STATE 176506), I RECENTLY ASKED DEPARTMENT WHETHER IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO ASSIGN THIS POSITION IN FY 1977 (DAMASCUS 1471). DEPARTMENT REPLY WAS THAT NO POSITION AVAILABLE IN FY 1977 AND THAT IT COULD GIVE NO ASSURANCE RE FY 1978 (STATE 53403). EMBASSY CURRENTLY HAS TWO PIT POSITIONS IN CONSULAR SECTION WHICH HAVE BEEN RENEWED THROUGH JUNE 8, 1977. AT THAT TIME, IF TRANSFER OF LEBANESE WORK HAS PROGRESSED SUFFICIENTLY, WE WOULD BE ABLE TO SURRENDER ONE POSITION BUT WOULD REQUEST EXTENSION OF SECOND POSITION THROUGH BUSY SUMMER/EARLY FALL PERIOD. WE WOULD THEN BE IN A POSITION TO SUBMIT NEW DATA
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REGARDING ADDITIONAL FSL POSITION IN CONSULAR SECTION. IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO KNOW WHEN THIS YEAR'S CONSULAR PACKAGE WILL BE DUE.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION:

ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION IS LEAST STABILIZED OF ANY IN MISSION OWING TO CONTINUED BUILDUP OF PERSONNEL IN OTHER SECTIONS AND AGENCIES AND TO ABNORMAL TURNOVER IN ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER POSITION. STEADY GROWTH IN SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS CONTINUES TO STRETCH BOTH AMERICAN AND LOCAL PERSONNEL TO THE LIMIT. AS POST MOVES TO ESTABLISH MORE ORDERLY AND FORMAL JOINT ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION, IT ENVISAGES AND HAS ALREADY REQUESTED (DAMASCUS 2073) CONVERSION OF SECOND GSO POSITION (USAID FUNDED) TO DAS POSITION. AN AMERICAN PERSONNEL OFFICER IS ALSO CONSIDERED NECESSARY BY ALL AGENCIES AT POST. GROWTH OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES HAS EXCEEDED CAPACITIES OF LOCAL PERSONNEL ASSISTANT SUPPORTED BY AD HOC NON-PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE FROM OTHER

AMERICANS IN ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION. PERSONNEL MATTERS ARE TAKING UP TOO MUCH TIME OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER WHO SHOULD BE DEVOTING MOST OF HIS ATTENTION TO SUPERVISION AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES. POST REQUESTS ESTABLISHMENT OF PERSONNEL OFFICER POSITION IN FY 1977 TO BE FILLED AND FUNDED FROM STATE OR USAID RESOURCES. ASSUMING EMPLOYMENT FREEZE WILL SOON BE LIFTED, CURRENT FSL POSITIONS ARE ADEQUATE TO COVER FY 77 REQUIREMENTS IN ALL AREAS EXCEPT GSO. WE ENVISAGE TRANSFERRING RECEPTIONIST POSITION DA-5-19 TO GSO FOR EMPLOYMENT OF FULL-TIME AUTO MECHANIC. IN ADDITION, HOWEVER, WE HAVE IMMEDIATE REQUIREMENT FOR ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE IN PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY SECTION AND IN CONTRACTING AND MAINTENANCE SECTION AND THEREFORE REQUEST ESTABLISHMENT OF TWO ADDITIONAL LOCAL POSITIONS: INVENTORY SPECIALIST (CORE) AND ASSISTANT BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR (DAS). INVENTORY CONTROL POSITION IS REQUIRED BY GROWING PROPERTY ACCOUNTABILITY LOAD OF ALL

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AGENCIES; ASSISTANT BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR NEEDED OWING TO CONTINUED GROWTH IN NON-STATE AGENCIES, PARTICULARLY USAID.

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-----081835Z 127182 /50

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 DAMASCUS 2277

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6. COMMUNICATIONS SECTION:

SINCE COMPLETION OF MAJOR CONSTRUCTION ON COMBINED COMMUNICATIONS CENTER IN JANUARY, COMMUNICATIONS SECTION HAS BEEN IN PROCESS OF INSTALLING ITSELF INTO ADEQUATE WORKING SPACE FOR FIRST TIME SINCE MISSION REOPENED. DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN UNABLE TO DATE, HOWEVER, TO FILL ONE COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT OFFICER POSITION AND POST HAS HAD TO RELY ON TDY SUPPORT TO MEET COMMUNICATIONS REQUIREMENTS. RESULT HAS BEEN HEAVY OVERLOADING OF EXISTING PERSONNEL WHICH HAS BEEN MAJOR FACTOR IN REQUESTS BY TWO OF THREE CURRENTLY ASSIGNED PERSONNEL TO SHORTEN TOURS. CURRENT SITUATION IS DESCRIBED IN DAMASCUS 2126. CONSIDERATION SHOULD ALSO BE GIVEN TO INSTALLING TERP AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE IN CALENDAR 1978 IN ORDER TO ALLEVIATE COMMUNICATIONS WORKLOAD.

7. SECURITY SECTION:

CURRENT COMPLEMENT OF ONE OFFICER AND ONE SECRETARY, SHARED BY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER, IS ADEQUATE UNDER PRESENT ARRANGEMENT OF HAVING CHIEF LOCAL GUARD DOUBLE AS LOCAL ASSISTANT TO SECURITY OFFICER AND LOCAL GUARD SERVE AS CONFIDENTIAL

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CHANCERY RECEPTIONIST. LOCAL GUARDS ARE ALL CONTRACT EMPLOYEES.

8. LOCAL CONTRACT EMPLOYEES:

RECOGNIZING THAT NEAR-TERM CONVERSION OF CERTAIN LOCAL CONTRACT EMPLOYEES FSO STATUS IS NOT LIKELY TO BE AUTHORIZED, EMBASSY NEVERTHELESS WISHES TO POINT OUT THAT MANY OF THESE EMPLOYEES ARE PERMANENT AND ARE BEING DISCRIMINATED AGAINST IN TERMS OF RETIREMENT AND OTHER BENEFITS BY BEING KEPT IN CONTRACT STATUS. THESE INCLUDE GARDENERS, PORTERS AND NOW A RECEPTIONIST, WHO IN MANY LARGER MISSIONS WOULD HAVE ESTABLISHED FSO POSITIONS.

9. WITH REGARD TO OTHER AGENCIES:

A. REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE: AFTER LENGTHY TDY OF AGATT IN DAMASCUS FOLLOWING HIS EVACUATION FROM BEIRUT, I CONCURRED IN THE TRANSFER OF THIS OFFICE TO DAMASCUS. HIS PRESENCE HERE HAS BEEN USEFUL TO MISSION AND HE HAS BEEN ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH HIS REGIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES FROM HERE. FAS HAS NOT YET DETERMINED WHETHER IT WISHES TO MAINTAIN THE ENTIRE REGIONAL OFFICE IN DAMASCUS OR A SPLIT OFFICE BETWEEN BEIRUT AND DAMASCUS. EITHER SOLUTION IS ACCEPTABLE, THOUGH FROM MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISORY STANDPOINT A SINGLE OFFICE WOULD APPEAR MOST EFFECTIVE. ESTABLISHMENT OF TWO LOCAL POSITIONS HAS BEEN REQUESTED.

B. DEFENSE ATTACHE OFFICE: PRESENT COMPLEMENT OF ONE OFFICER, ONE WARRANT OFFICER AND ONE LOCAL HIRE SECRETARY IS ENTIRELY ADEQUATE GIVEN CURRENT RESTRICTED ACCESS TO SYRIAN MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT.

C. USIS: CURRENT PERSONNEL STRENGTH OF TWO OFFICERS, ONE LOCAL HIRE AMERICAN ASSISTANT AND EIGHT FSLs CAN ACCOMPLISH PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS IN CAPITAL CITY OF DAMASCUS
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BUT ANOTHER U.S. OFFICER IS REQUIRED TO CARRY OUT U.S. CULTURAL/INFORMATION EFFORTS IN OTHER SYRIAN CITIES AND REGIONAL UNIVERSITIES IN MORE THAN AN OCCASIONAL, AD HOC MANNER. I SUPPORT THE ASSIGNMENT OF A THIRD USIS OFFICER TO DAMASCUS.

D. USAID: WITH SUBSTANTIAL ANNUAL INCREMENTS IN U.S. ASSISTANCE TO SYRIA, I HAVE SOUGHT TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT STAFFING WAS ADEQUATE TO ASSURE PROPER PLANNING, COORDINATION, DISBURSEMENT AND ACCOUNTING OF APPROPRIATED FUNDS. AT SAME TIME, RECOGNIZING DIFFICULTIES OF LIVING IN SYRIAN ENVIRONMENT AND SENSITIVITIES WHICH COULD BE AROUSED BY LARGE INCREASES IN STAFF, I HAVE INSISTED ON BEING SATISFIED THAT FULL-TIME JOB EXISTS BEFORE APPROVING ANY POSITION INCREASE AND THAT TO MAXIMUM EXTENT POSSIBLE PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND FOLLOW-ON BE HANDLED BY TDY PERSONNEL. I HAVE TO DATE APPROVED 16 U.S. POSITIONS THROUGH FY 1977 AND WILL CONTINUE TO REVIEW CAREFULLY EVERY USAID REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL.

10. AS FOR STATE STAFFING REQUIREMENTS IN FY 1979, ASSUMING DAS GSO POSITION AND STATE OR AID PERSONNEL OFFICER ARE APPROVED, POST FORESEES NO REQUIREMENT FOR ADDITIONAL AMERICAN POSITIONS. REGARDING LOCAL PROGRAM POSITIONS, IT IS ASSUMED THAT CONSULAR WORKLOAD STATISTICS WILL HAVE JUSTIFIED ADDITION OF AT LEAST ONE LOCAL POSITION IN FY 1978 OR FY 1979. ADDITION OF DRIVER FOR DCM WILL ALSO BE REQUIRED IN FY 1979. NUMBER OF FAAS LOCAL POSITIONS REQUIRED IN FY 1979 CANNOT NOW BE DETERMINED PRECISELY. IT WILL DEPEND IN LARGE PART ON FY 1978/79 INCREASES IN USAID PERSONNEL WHICH WILL IN TURN DEPEND ON CONGRESSIONAL ACTION. I CAN PROJECT A NEED FOR AN APPLIANCE REPAIR SPECIALIST (CORE) IN GSO IN FY 1979 BUT AM UNABLE TO DETERMINE WHETHER OTHER LOCAL GSO, B&F AND PERSONNEL POSITIONS MAY BE REQUIRED.

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11. SINCE POST IS STILL IN POSITION OF BUILDING UP TO ITS FULL OPERATIONAL LEVEL, I WOULD STRONGLY OPPOSE ANY DECREASES IN AMERICAN OR LOCAL STAFF AT THIS TIME. FOR PURPOSES OF STATE 51901 FOLLOWING ARE LESS ESSENTIAL CURRENT POSITIONS:

AMERICAN POSITION NO. 57-01-7-250 - REGIONAL SECURITY OFFICER.

LOCAL POSITION NO. DA-5-20 - MESSENGER

LOCAL POSITION NO. DA-5-14 - SENIOR ASSISTANT (B&F)III

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R 081539Z APR 77
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12. MISSION STAFFING CHART

AGENCY/FUNCTION CURRENT FY 77

AMER	AMER	FSL	FSL
OFFS	F STAFF	PROF	STAFF

STATE

EXECUTIVE	2	2	1
POLITICAL	3	2	1
ECON/COML	MS 2	1	2 1
CONSULAR	1	3	
ADMIN	4'(1DAS)	17"(3DAS)	18(7DAS)

COMMUNICATIONS	2	8	1	3
SECURITY	1	1		

USIS

EXECUTIVE	1	1	1	2
CULTURAL	1		3	
INFORMATIONAL	1'		2	

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AGRICULTURE	1	1'	1'
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DEPT OF DEFENSE

DAO	2	1
MARINES		8'

A.I.D.

EXECUTIVE	2'	2		3
PROGRAM	2		2	1
CONTROLLER	2		3	1
CAPITAL PROJECTS	3		2	1
SUPPLY MANAGEMENT		1		2
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	2		2	1
TRAINING	1		2	1
ADMINISTRATIVE	1			3

TOTALS	35	26	45	39
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' ONE FY 1977 POSITION REQUESTED WITH AMBASSADOR'S CONCURRENCE

" TWO FY 1977 POSITIONS REQUESTED.

13. PROJECTED FY 79

AGENCY/FUNCTION	AMER	AMER	FSL	FSL
OFFS	STAFF	PROF	STAFF	

STATE

EXECUTIVE	2	2		2
POLITICAL	3	2	2	1
CONSULAR	1		3	1
ECON/COML	2		1	2
ADMIN	4		17	19

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COMMUNICATIONS	2	8	1	3
SECURITY	1	1		

14. POST IS IN PROCESS OF UPDATING FUNDING REQUIREMENTS
FOR THIRD AND FOURTH QUARTERS OF FY 1977 AND OF PREPARING
INITIAL FY 1978 ESTIMATES. ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES
WILL BE SUBMITTED SEPTTEL.
MURPHY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARM REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 08-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770123-0593
Format: TEL
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770475/aaaacmyg.tel
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Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 8
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2859948
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PARM: ANNUAL POLICY AND RESOURCE ASSESSMENT FY 1979 - PART II AND III
TAGS: AMGT, PFOR, US, SY
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/af0749a8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009